

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION SS-25

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O R 231750Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3507
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T LISBON 4157

EXDIS

DEPT ALSO PASS INFO DIA WASHDC AND USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

EO 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PRO-COMMUNIST POWER PLAY

REF: (A) STATE 173076 (NOTAL); (B) LISBON 4129; (C) LISBON 4149

1. SAW VITOR ALVES THIS AFTERNOON, JULY 23. TOLD HIM THAT
SUBSEQUENT TO MY CONVERSATION WITH MELO ANTUNES I HAD PICKED
UP DISTURBING REPORTS OF POSSIBLE LEFTIST POWER PLAY FROM A
SOURCE I CONSIDERED TRUSTWORTHY. SINCE I WAS SURE ANTUNES
HAD CONFIDED IN VITOR ALVES ON MY CONVERSATION WITH HIM I
THOUGHT I WOULD SEEK COMMENTS ON MY RECENT INFORMATION
FROM HIM (ALVES).

2. TOLD HIM I HAD HEARD THAT PRO-COMMUNIST ELEMENTS ON
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MIGHT MOVE AGAINST DEMOCRATIC FORCES
AT THE SAME TIME A NEW LEFTIST GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL
UNITY IS ANNOUNCED. I HAD ALSO HEARD REPORTS THAT COSTA
GOMES HAD BEEN GIVEN FORGED AMERICAN INVASION PLAN, WHICH

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PRESUMABLY WOULD BE USED TO TOUCH OFF COMMUNIST POWER PLAY.

3. SAID I ASSUMED THAT SUCH A MOVE WAS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE THE POSITION OF MODERATES WAS GRADUALLY STRENGTHENING IN REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

4. VITOR ALVES RESPONDED THAT ONE PLAN BEING CONSIDERED BY GONCALVES WAS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT CONSISTING OF FRINGE GROUPS RUNNING FROM THE FAR-LEFT WING OF THE SOCIALISTS (WHO WOULD PRESUMABLY BREAK AWAY FROM THE PSP) TO THE UDP. SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE MODERATES, AND WOULD PROVOKE A CRISIS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

5. ALVES SAID THERE WERE A LOT OF RUMORS ABOUT AN AMERICAN INVASION. WHAT HAD ACTUALLY BEEN TOLD TO COSTA GOMES WAS THAT THE PENTAGON HAD CONDUCTED A WAR GAME IN WHICH ONE OF THE TARGET COUNTRIES WAS PORTUGAL. ALVES HAD EXPLAINED TO VARIOUS PEOPLE THAT THESE WAR GAMES WERE NORMAL AND SIGNIFIED NOTHING.

6. CONCERNING ARRESTS, VITOR ALVES SAID IT WAS USUAL IN TIMES OF POLITICAL TENSION FOR POLITICAL FIGURES TO MOVE FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AT NIGHT.

7. ALVES CONFIRMED MY ASSESSMENT THAT MODERATES NOW HAD A MAJORITY OF VOTES ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. BUT HE EMPHASIZED THAT EVENTS WERE VERY TENSE AND VOTES WERE ONLY ONE WEAPON. WE HAD TO CONSIDER THAT THE COMMUNISTS CONTROLLED SUCH KEY AREAS AS THE AFM ASSEMBLY, THE MEDIA AND THE 5TH DIVISION. THUS HE THOUGHT FORCES ON THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL WERE ABOUT EVEN. NEVERTHELESS COMMUNISTS WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY DESPERATE. THE MAIN REASON WAS THAT THEY HAD EXPECTED MILITARY SUPPORT IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PROSELYTIZE IN RURAL AREAS, BUT THIS WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. HENSE THEY LOSING SUPPORT.

8. ALVES CONCLUDED THAT WHILE HE DID NOT KNOW OF ANY SPECIFIC TAKEOVER PLANS THE SITUATION WAS VERY CONFUSING AND THERE WAS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT COMMUNISTS WOULD MAKE A POWER MOVE TO PUSH MODERATES OUT. HE THOUGHT THE SITUATION WOULD REACH A HEAD BY THE END OF THE WEEK, AND HAD ACCORDINGLY CANCELLED ALL

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HIS TRAVEL PLANS. (HE IS ROVING AMBASSADOR, BUT ALSO A RC MEMBER.)

9. COMMENT: ALVES WAS MORE RESTRAINED IN HIS ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION THAN SOARES BUT THEN HE IS BY NATURE A CALMER, LESS POLITICAL PERSON. I THINK HE BELIEVES LARGE SCALE OVERT COMMUNIST POWER PLAY LESS LIKELY THAN SOARES BUT I NOTE HE DID NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR, PERHAPS ACCOUNTING FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN TONE, IS THAT SOARES IS IN THE STREET LOOKING IN WHEREAS ALVES IS STILL INSIDE COUNTING VOTES AND HOPING TO PULL OFF HIS OWN POWER PLAY.

10. BOTH SIDES SEEM TO BE GEARING UP FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW GOVERNMENT WITH MODERATES PREPARED TO PUSH FOR A VOTE AND WALK OUT IF THEY DON'T GET ONE, OR IF LEFTIST GOVERNMENT JAMMED DOWN THEIR THROATS ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. PRO-COMMUNISTS ARE DESIGNING THEIR OWN GAME PLAN WHICH WILL CERTAINLY INVOLVE ALL OUT PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE AT TIME NEW AND POSSIBLY DIFFERENT STYLE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED. WHETHER THEY WILL GO SO FAR AS TO MAKE ARRESTS POBABLY DEPENDS UPON THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THEIR STRENGTH AT THE TIME ISSUE REACHES A HEAD.

11. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION THE DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON WAR GAMES WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED AS INVOLVING PORTUGAL.
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES

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